GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:679
ANSWERED ON:29.02.2000
CENSUS 2001
MANJAY LAL

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Census Commission of India has conducted any study to find out the number of persons with disabilities in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether the Government propose to find out the number of persons with disabilities in the Census to be conducted by the Census Commission of India during 2001;

(d) whether the Government propose to involve individual Governmental Organisations/Non-Governmental Organisations working in the field of disability in this endeavour;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI)

(a) & (b): The Census of India has not conducted any special study to find out the number of persons with disabilities in India. It may, however, be stated that data on infirmities was collected in the earlier censuses of 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931. Subsequently, due to the serious doubts expressed by the then Census Commissioners about the authenticity and quality of data collected on disabled population, the enumeration of physically handicapped persons was discontinued during 1941 Census. It was felt that questions on disabled population did not lend subsequent Censuses of 1951, 1961 & 1971 the question on disabilities was not canvassed.
1981 was proclaimed as the International year for the disabled. On a strong plea made by the then Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, a question on physically handicapped was canvassed during the Houselisting Operations of 1981 Census inspite of serious reservations expressed by the then Census Commissioner on the ability of the census to collect reliable data on this characteristic. When the results of 1981 Census were finally available, it was felt that there was considerable under-enumeration of physically handicapped persons. The 1981 Census results also supported the views expressed by the earlier Census Commissioners that, by their sheer design and nature, the census operations do not lend themselves to the determination or identification of people with special and infrequent characteristics of this nature. It was felt that the enumeration of the physically handicapped continued to be beyond the scope and capacity of Census Operations.

(c): No, Sir.
(d) to (f): Since it is not proposed to canvass the question on disability at the Census of India 2001, the question of involving Government and Non-government agencies does not arise.